

Socialist Worker

Kaimahi Whakahuihui



For Workers' Power and International Socialism

\$1

inside

**South Korean strikes
rattle government**
— Page 2

**Triads, racism,
gangs and crime**
— Page 3

Waitangi hikoi challenges the coalition government

Unite to fight National and NZ First

THE COALITION between National and New Zealand First could face its first mass challenge this Waitangi Day.

A hikoi, or march, is planned from Waitangi to Rotorua to push Maori demands for tino rangitiratanga and to demand the return of Forestry Corp lands – sold last year to Brierly Investments.

Both these issues go to the heart of NZ First's treachery in entering into coalition with National. The hikoi is a brilliant opportunity to begin a fightback against their rotten deal.

Before the election last year NZ First campaigned strongly against issues like National's fiscal envelope and the forestry sell-off, as well as promising more self-determination for Maori.

But the coalition deal it struck with National abandoned all of this.

The billion dollar cap on the fiscal envelope may have gone in words, but NZ First agreed that all future settlements of Treaty grievances would be made "having regard to the nature of Treaty settlements already made".

As all the settlements offered by National were made under the fiscal envelope policy, this seems like a change of rhetoric rather than reality.

The promise made by NZ First to buy back the

\$2 billion in state owned forests sold off by National before the election – a policy it claimed was non-negotiable – has been completely abandoned.

And the presence of five NZ First Maori list MPs in the coalition government, and three NZ First Maori MPs in cabinet, has done nothing to change life for the majority of Maori...or Pakeha for that matter.

Instead of increasing government funding for the cash-starved public sector, coalition Treasurer Winston Peters has demanded government departments "cut fat" from their budgets.

The Employment Contracts Act is to remain virtually untouched, while National's right-wing Minister of Labour Max Bradford has signalled he wants to get rid of statutory holidays and make the Employment Court even more anti-worker than it is at present.

State House rents are to be returned to market levels after only a five month freeze. Welfare benefits are to remain at their current poverty level.

All these are reasons why a NZ First/National coalition is little better than National governing alone. And they are all reasons why we need to build a mass fightback against their disgusting coalition agreement.

The revolt against National's fiscal envelope proposal killed it stone dead. Now we need similar actions to kill off this coalition government.



South Korea

A tiger by the tail

THE NEW year has seen the biggest strike wave in South Korea's history, paralysing industry as hundreds of thousands of workers took part in general strikes.

The strikes are against a new labour law which the ruling New Korea Party, led by Kim Young Sam, railroaded through a clandestine session of parliament on Boxing Day.

The law rips up guarantees on job security and gives the bosses of the giant conglomerates which dominate the economy a free hand. It also delays the recognition of full trade union rights until 2002.

These actions give lie to the claims that South Korea, one of the "Asian Tiger" economies, is a model of social stability and peaceful development.

The strikes shut South Korea's key export industries – shipbuilding, cars and electronics. Thousands of trade unionists and students also rallied in the capital, Seoul, in the face of massed ranks of riot police.

The illegal Korea Confederation of Trade Unions, with 500,000 members, began the actions by calling its members out on indefinite strike.

The 1.2 million strong Federation of Korean Trade Unions, originally set up by the state, was forced to call rallies and strikes in support. It is the first time in the 50 year history of the FKTU that it has called such action.

The 15 percent of South Korean workers who are in these two union federations are concentrated in key

export industries like shipbuilding, electronics and engineering, hospitals and transport.

The Korean government and business press claimed the strikes were unpopular and directed by the authoritarian North Korean regime. But it was forced to resort to violence and intimidation in an effort to break the strikes.

It used riot police and tear gas on demonstrations of unionists and students, and threatened to arrest up to 50 union leaders.

Over 3,000 workers and students fought pitched battles with riot police in Seoul's fashionable shopping district after police tried to stop a march out of the Catholic Myongdong Cathedral where key strike leaders had sought sanctuary.

Impact

But the attempt to break the actions through force failed and the impact of the stoppages forced the governing New Korea Party to agree to send the new law back to Parliament to be debated.

Economists estimate the strikes cost about \$5 billion in lost output.

President Kim Young Sam also was forced to agree to consider legalising the unofficial trade unions before 2002. Police also freed all trade union leaders who had been arrested in the recent mass strikes.

But about 200,000 workers still defied the law and rallied in the capital Seoul on Sunday to hear Kwon Young Kil of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions say mass strikes could restart soon if the government did not back down further.



TENS OF thousands of workers and students rally in Seoul against new labour laws.

Kim is the first South Korean president for over 30 years not to have come from the military. He had credibility as an opponent of the previous military regime and was very popular when he became president in 1993.

Now his popularity has plummeted along with his reputation as a democrat.

South Korean workers have already shown they can humble their bosses and government. They have also shown they have the power to win an unequivocal victory.

Strikes show myth of globalisation

THE STRIKES in South Korea are a magnificent response to the government's attack on workers rights.

They show how the Employment Contracts Act could have been defeated in 1991. But the leadership of the Council of Trade Unions refused to heed grassroots calls for a general strike and instead stated that "workers will have to work within the new legislation."

This CTU leadership argued it was necessary to have greater flexibility and competitiveness in the workplace.

The same arguments were used by South Korean bosses to justify the new labour laws there.

While we are told we should make sacrifices to attract investment from countries like South Korea, bosses in South Korea play up the threat of competition from lower wage countries in Asia like China and Vietnam.

The South Korean government claims over 200,000 jobs have been lost to these countries and that workers have to buckle under to make the country competitive.

Workers in Aotearoa are told

they have to accept low pay and long hours to attract more investment. Commentators use the buzz word "globalisation" to refer to companies moving investments around the world.

But jobs, whether in South Korea or Aotearoa, have been lost by "restructuring" within countries rather than by jobs being transported to the other side of the world.

Bosses of South Korea's giant conglomerates want to lay off workers in the same way as bosses in Aotearoa.

Too expensive?

Kim Young-kwon of the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions says, "They say we are too expensive. They don't think of us as a family, just something to be bought and sold."

But the resistance to the bosses' attacks in South Korea shows there is an alternative to workers in different countries being turned against each other.

And it shows there is an alternative to the craven leadership the CTU displayed in the fight against the Employment Contracts Act.

Australia

Land rights ruling sparks racist backlash

A DECISION by the Australian High Court that the granting of pastoral leases over traditional land claimed by Aboriginal people does not automatically extinguish their claims has sparked a racist backlash from mining bosses, pastoralists, and the conservative Liberal government.

This latest case – the Wik decision – follows the Court's finding in the Mabo case that Aborigines can claim native title to land they have occupied from before European settlement.

For years the Courts had held Australia was *terra nullius*, or unsettled, before Europeans arrived and denied any Aboriginal rights to land.

Following Mabo, the then Labour government of Paul Keating hurriedly rushed through legislation to ensuring mining companies and big landowners "security" of ownership against any aboriginal claims.

As a result, only one native title claim has been granted in the three years since it was brought in.

Now following the Wik decision the mining bosses and pastoralists are demanding more protection. They claim the decision will create "paralysis" and throw the whole country into turmoil.

The Liberal government of John

Howard is obliging by putting forward amendments to the Native Title Act that will make it even more impossible for Aborigines to claim rights to their land than it already is.

Disgrace

The treatment of the Wik people at the hands of the mining companies and governments is disgraceful. In the late 1800s they were incarcerated in three church missions.

Fifty years later, when Bauxite was discovered under the land where the missions were situated,

the Queensland state government granted Comalco a 110 year lease over 600,000 hectares of Wik land – the Weipa reserve containing up to three billion tonnes of ore.

This mine at Weipa was the site of a national coal and maritime strike in 1995 after 70 workers resisted mining giant CRA's push to sign individual contracts. CRA owns Comalco, and made \$1.75 billion in profits in 1995.

Now CRA and other giant companies are calling for a return to the racist concept of *terra nullius* through legislation declaring pastoral leases extinguish native title.

This racist response would continue to deny the Aboriginal people justice after two hundred years of oppression.

Albanian pyramid riots

TENS OF thousands of workers and farmers fought with riot police and troops in cities across Albania last weekend.

The collapse of dodgy "pyramid investment schemes" has caused the huge protests.

About half Albania's 3.2 million population were conned into investing in the schemes. The losses add up to a third of the value of total production in Albania, the poorest country in Europe.

The right wing government of President Sali Berisha failed to regulate the schemes and received money from two of the biggest.

The financial crisis has focused widespread anger with the government which rigged results and intimidated opposition

parties in elections last year.

Demonstrators shouted, "We shall overthrow the government at all costs."

The Democratic Party came to power in 1992 as huge food riots and strikes drove out the Stalinist regime.

But its turn to the free market has meant more hardship for ordinary Albanians.

Bosses from the previous regime kept their positions and became even more wealthy overnight – the average wage for workers is \$125 a week.

Ordinary Albanians fell for the pyramid scams because they thought that was how the free market would make them rich.

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Triad scaremongering is purely racist

THE POLICE and the media have issued dire warnings about Asian triad gangs entrenching themselves in New Zealand.

They claim the triads have created a "climate of fear" on the streets of Auckland for Asian students. Unless stopped, the Police claim, the triads will penetrate into "mainstream" New Zealand.

This scaremongering is playing on racist assumptions about "secretive" and "different" Asian culture. It mirrors the anti-immigration campaign waged by Winston Peters and NZ First before the election last year.

The Police and the media were unable to point to any actual instances of triad related crime.

The only evidence they provided for the existence of triad activity were some stories about Asian youths facing intimidation on Auckland streets.

This is hardly the basis for claiming organised Asian crime is flourishing in Aotearoa.

ishing in Aotearoa.

Claims that triad loan sharks had flaunted a severed hand at Auckland's casino to encourage Asians to pay debts "appeared to be an exaggeration", admitted the Auckland region police commander Brion Duncan.

And there is no support from New Zealand's Asian community for the Police's view that triads are entrenched in New Zealand.

The president of the Malaysian Society, George Tan, says that the so-called triads are "nothing but a bunch of young bullies".

He went on to say he was more concerned his children would be racially abused on the street than attacked by triad members.

A former chief inspector in the Hong Kong police, Murray Hoare, said New Zealand was too small and not lucrative enough to attract triads.

Asian teenagers may be scaring people by naming themselves after triads in much the same way as Pacific Island and Maori youth call themselves Bloods or Cripps, but they are far from the real thing.

But despite the lack of evidence of triad activity, the NZ First Minister of Police Jack Elder has proposed tougher immigration and citizenship barriers. Labour MP Phil Goff backed up this call at a joint news conference.

This is a racist response to a non-existent problem. As George Tan warns, it has the potential to whip up racial hatred because of the way triads are equated with Asians.

Tougher immigration laws will only worsen the problem of racism toward Asians in Aotearoa - a racism promoted by NZ First's message that too many immigrants are entering the country.



Triads: tough immigration net on cards

Triads entrenched on streets: police
Violence a nightly risk for Asian youths

THE MEDIA has tried to whip up an anti-Asian frenzy.

Crime and capitalism

THE ENTIRE approach of the capitalist system to crime is stunningly hypocritical.

It condemns those who "unlawfully" take others' property or use violence. There is a whole system of laws, police, courts and prisons to catch and punish these criminals.

But at the same time the entire system of capitalism is based on theft and the threat of violence.

Capitalism was only established in Aotearoa by the theft and fraudulent purchase of Maori lands. When this was resisted there was no hesitation to use violence to force Maori off their land.

It continues daily through the systematic theft from the majority who work and produce all of society's wealth by the tiny minority who own and control the workplaces and resources.

The multi-millionaires who own most of New Zealand's resources are rich because of the wealth they take from those who work for them. Yet instead of being reviled as thieves, they are hailed as "great entrepreneurs" and held up as role models.

If the power and privilege of this tiny ruling class is threatened then the laws and police force are there to protect them. Yet every time the police break up a picket or stop a demonstration they are praised for their bravery, not labelled violent offenders.

And, of course, the guardians of law and order are often as guilty of breaking the law as are "ordinary" criminals.

The admission of the a Northland District Court judge for fraudulently claiming false travel expenses is proof of this.

Because capitalism creates a small minority with immense wealth while the majority have to struggle with low pay, unemployment and poverty it is hardly surprising that people turn to crime.

Faced with a future of material hardship, crimes such as burglary and theft are all too understandable.

Drugs provide an easy and quick escape from the pressures of living in hardship. These same pressures lead to violence - most often within the domestic home.

But rather than deal with these causes of crime, politicians from all parties blame the individual and call for more power for the police and tougher penalties to deter criminals.

Any real solution to the problem of crime must deal with the causes of it - the division of society into a struggling majority and an ultra-rich minority. Taking the riches off this minority and using it to get rid of poverty would solve most of the problems of crime at one stroke.

But to do this we need to get rid of the capitalist system that breeds crime and replace it with a socialist system.

Get tough on gangs?

THE COALITION government is planning to pass legislation to give the police greater powers to spy on and break up gangs. Labour MPs Phil Goff and Mike Moore have been at the forefront of calling for this law.

But handing more power to the police will do nothing to deal with why gang crime occurs. The growth in gang numbers and crime has gone hand in hand with unemployment and the scrapping of work schemes to help "at risk" unemployed.

The national coordinator of the Mongrel Mob Advisory Panel, Harry Tam, points out "This sort of assistance has diminished. Consequently there has been an explosion in gang membership."

Giving more powers to the police, or appointing an extra 500 police as the coalition plans to do, will do nothing to remove these causes of gang crime.

And the new law will carry dangers for unionists or anyone protesting against government policy. Its definition of what constitutes a "gang" could be stretched to cover anyone planning protest action which breaks the law.

This will allow the police to use electronic surveillance to spy on protest groups and unions, as well as prevent illegal associations.

The coalition's new law, along with the broadening of the powers of the SIS, will be a massive invasion of the civil liberties of not only gang members but all groups who the state wants to spy on.

Socialist Worker

1997 IS a new year with a new coalition government in power.

Yet for the majority of New Zealanders little has changed. We continue to struggle on with low pay, long work hours, unemployment and poverty.

Despite NZ First's promises that they'll deliver more money for health and education, waiting lists for public hospitals continue to grow and a teacher shortage means class sizes are shooting upwards.

The lesson from the election is that if anything is going to change then we will have to fight for it.

Socialist Worker has a proud tradition of always standing alongside all those who are fighting back for a better world.

We support workers on strike for higher pay and better conditions.

\$5,000 Appeal

"Socialist Worker has a proud tradition of always standing alongside all those who are fighting back for a better world."

tions. We were alongside university students when they occupied their registry buildings against higher student fees.

When Maori protest for the return of their lands, when people rally against racism, **Socialist Worker** is there in support.

That is because we are the newspaper that consistently takes the side of the oppressed and those in struggle. And rather than just report the news, we show how it is possible to build a better world through struggle.

But all this requires money - funds which do not come from big business advertising or rich owners.

Instead, we rely on our readers and supporters to help us meet the costs of producing **Socialist Worker**. Without this support we cannot do our work, which is necessary for all those who want to build a better Aotearoa.

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The Peruvian hostage crisis

GUERRILLAS FROM the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) continue to hold 73 hostages seized in a surprise raid December 17 on the home of the Japanese Ambassador in Lima, Peru.

The guerillas' main demand is the release of some 400 imprisoned MRTA members.

Throughout the crisis the media has referred to the MRTA as "Marxist rebels". Are they?

As socialists, our sympathies lie with the guerillas, whose actions have exposed the brutal regime of President Alberto Fujimori.

Under Fujimori's rule Peru has been forced to undergo free-market economic "reforms" which have brought misery to millions. The number of Peruvians living below the poverty line has jumped from 6 million in 1990 to over 13 million today.

Some 85 per cent of workers don't have full-time jobs, and 90 per cent of school children don't have books.

Fujimori has pushed through his economic austerity measures hand-in-hand with massive repression designed to stop any popular opposition.

Yet while it is true the guerillas are fighting the injustices of Fujimori's dictatorship, they have little to do with the tradition of socialism founded by Karl Marx.

Self-emancipation

Marx conceived of socialism as "the self-emancipation of the working class." He stressed that socialism could only be won as the culmination of a struggle of workers – the mass of the population.

This vision of socialism from below stands in contradiction to the idea that socialism can be legislated into existence or imposed by a minority acting in the name of workers and peasants.

The Cuban revolution of 1959 – to which groups like the MRTA look – offers one example of the failure by a committed minority to remake society from above.

In the Cuban revolution, a small group of guerillas, led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, toppled the hated Batista dictatorship.

The Batista regime was so intensely unpopular among all sections of the population that the actions of just a few hundred armed guerillas was enough to bring it down.

These guerillas were not workers but mainly middle-class intellectuals. When they seized power they urged workers to stay at their jobs.

Castro himself did not describe the revolution as "socialist" until some years after the insurrection. Then he adopted the rhetoric of socialism without ever embracing its substance – the working class majority of society exercising democratic control over its resources.

Instead Castro looked to the Soviet Union as a model of state capitalist development. Cut off by a US economic blockade, Cuba's leaders used the power of the state to nationalise industry and, with Russian support, attempted to diversify the economy.

But the withdrawal of Russian aid in the late 1980's revealed Cuba to be an economically devastated country, still dependant on production of a single crop – sugar.

Class divided

Moreover, Cuba remained a society divided by class, with a state bureaucracy committed to developing the economy on the backs of Cuban workers.

Despite the failure of the Cuban Revolution to achieve many of the goals set for itself, its example continues to influence revolutionaries in Latin America.

The latest action of the MRTA, while spectacular, is an act of desperation in the face of the government's brutal repression.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s mass organisations of workers, peasants and poor city dwellers challenged the Peruvian government from below.

The MRTA's adoption of armed struggle in the early 1980s represented a retreat from involvement in those struggles.

The supposed triumph of the free market in places like Peru has produced mass unemployment, desperate poverty and severe repression. But the actions of groups like the MRTA offers no answers.

The seizure of the hostages has left the mass of the population as passive observers, and has had no real effect on the government.

The only way to mobilise the bitterness that threatens to explode in countries like Peru is to look to the collective power of organised workers – the politics of revolutionary Marxism.

The new coalition More attacks, more cuts

MANY PEOPLE had hoped that the election results would bring some relief from cuts to government spending and workers' living standards.

But the formation of a coalition between National and NZ First has dashed those hopes.

The coalition has spelled out its policies in an agreement signed by Jim Bolger and Winston Peters.

This document shows there will be little change from the path followed by National for the last six years. It promises more cuts and more attacks.

GRANT MORGAN and ANDREW GEDDIS look at what the coalition agreement holds for the majority of us.

SIX YEARS of National rule have meant the living standards of most people have been hammered.

Real wages have continued to fall, benefit levels have been slashed, continued underfunding and user pays policies have brought the public health and education systems to the edge of crisis.

The result of this is a widespread bitterness and anger. At the last election a clear majority of people voted for parties that campaigned on an anti-National platform.

Yet we find National is back in control of the government, being propped up by NZ First.

It is no surprise that opinion polls after the announcement of the coalition showed the majority of voters condemned NZ First's decision to leap into bed with National.

Nor is it surprising that NZ First supporters feel betrayed by the decision.

NZ First MPs like Tau Henare, who said before the election he would never sit in cabinet with National, are now in power with the very party that he denounced before October last year.

In the aftermath of the coalition announcement polls show NZ First support fell by a third.

But not all are unhappy with the coalition deal. An editorial in the pro-business magazine, the *National Business Review*, said this:

"However much criticism can be heaped on the National-NZ First coalition – and there's plenty – the outcome for the country is far and away preferable to having a Centre-Left government."

Apparently Winston Peters and NZ First agrees more with the *NBR* than with their own supporters.

Backtracking already

READING THE coalition agreement makes it very clear that the first priority is going to be continuing the free-market economic policies that have been such a boon to the rich in New Zealand.

The coalition will be "implementing orthodox economic policies" with a "strong commitment to low inflation, prudent and conservative fiscal management and, over time, lower taxes and reduced public debt..."

These are the very policies that have led to the massive growth of poverty and inequality in Aotearoa.

Many of those who have suffered most under the "orthodox economic policies" embraced by the coalition voted for NZ First in the mistaken belief that they offered some sort of relief.

But instead, NZ First is following in National's footsteps by demanding more cuts to government spending.

Winston Peters claims that "there is a lot of fat in the system that can be trimmed... everyone knows where. We have to go department by department and analyse why we are doing things."

Underfunding

So instead of working to put more money into chronically underfunded areas like health, education and social welfare, the coalition is demanding more cuts.

This is on top of years of spending cuts by both Labour and National governments that have left the public service tottering on the verge of collapse.

Disasters like the Cave Creek platform collapse, the deaths of children under Social Welfare supervision as well as the blossom-

ing waiting lists in our public hospitals are the result.

However, the coalition is being forced into looking for cuts to government spending by the worries of the money markets.

Winston Peters is trying to reassure the tiny minority who control the money markets he will not threaten their profits by increasing government spending. Despite all his rhetoric against big business and overseas control, he has to reassure them that their profits are safe.

That is why the minor spending promises made by NZ First are tagged to the condition that economic growth averages 3.4 per cent per annum.

This means that if the economic recovery enjoyed by New Zealand's companies and top income earners should falter, then all the promises made by the coalition will be abandoned.

Also, there may be a host of agreements made between NZ First and National which we know nothing about yet.

Max Bradford, National's right-wing Minister of Labour, showed this when he revealed a secret addition to the coalition agreement in which NZ First agreed to the sell off of parts of the Trans Power electricity grid.

Asset Sales

This contradicts NZ First's claim to oppose all future asset sales.

Despite Winston Peter's denial of the secret deal, a National Party MP Warren Kidd confirmed it had been made.

Labour Leader Helen Clark also revealed how NZ First had pushed for TVNZ to be able to sell off its regional TV channels.

Who knows what other backdowns remain secret.

A Socialist Worker analysis of the National-NZ First coalition agreement



This 20 page pamphlet

- analyses the coalition agreement between National and NZ First;
- looks at the likely results for Maori, health, education, housing, etc;
- examines the response of Alliance and Labour to the coalition deal;

Available from Box 8851, Auckland. We'll send it to you for a donation to the Socialist Worker New Year Appeal



WINSTON PETERS – "This Prime Minister is not fit for the job, and come October 12 he will be out."

What the coalition will deliver us

Health

BEFORE THE election NZ First promised to reverse most of the National government's health reforms.

It promised to get rid of the profit motive for running public hospitals, introduce free doctors visits to children under 12, provide extra money for surgery, remove asset testing for the elderly in long-term care and implement all the recommendations of the Mason Report into mental health.

NZ First's promises on health was one of the reasons it attracted so much support. Yet the deal it has made with National falls far short of these promises.

Only children under 5 are to receive free doctors visits. A visit for a child over six will still cost up to \$25.

NZ First's promise to spend \$1.7 billion on health over 3 years has been pared down to \$809 million. The Public Health Coalition described this as "pathetically inadequate".

Even this spending looks doubtful after the coalition's Health Minister Bill English said some costings in health "had been plucked out of the air" and some of the coalition's promised spending was "purely theoretical".

Maximum waiting times for surgery are promised based on a "points" booking system. Geoffrey Horne, professor of surgery at the Wellington Medical School, described this as "a rationing system. It has nothing to do with efficiencies or logic."

The promise to get rid of the profit motive for public hospitals is more style than substance.

The requirement for hospitals to make a profit is replaced with the requirement that they act in a "businesslike way".

The four Regional Health Authorities are to be combined into one national body but the split between funders and providers is to remain in the health system.

Education

ALTOGETHER THE coalition promises to spend another \$1.8 billion on education over the next three years.

But education experts say that this won't serve the funding crisis in our public schools. Many schools are turning away pupils because of a shortage of teachers and classrooms, while others are levying illegal charges to make ends meet.

Bulk funding remains official government policy, despite NZ First's promise to dump it. This threatens to further create a division of compulsory education into "upper class" and "lower class" schools.

The coalition has pledged to "work towards" a universal student allowance (worth the same as the dole) but tertiary fees and student loans remain in place. There are no plans to increase funding for tertiary education, meaning fees and student debt will continue to skyrocket.

Housing

NZ FIRST did a policy U-turn

away from income-related rents in favour of National's market rents policy a few weeks before the election. After campaigning on a three-year state rent freeze, NZ First agreed to only an "interim freeze...pending a review of affordability issues".

Just five weeks later National's Housing Minister announced the freeze will end in March, along with a 10 per cent increase in the accommodation supplement.

This makes a mockery of the coalition agreement's claim that meeting "the Crown's social obligations in a businesslike manner" would now "replace the profit focus" of Housing New Zealand.

The increase in the accommodation supplement will do nothing to compensate for state house rent hikes. This hike has led the Salvation Army to say housing is the biggest social problem facing New Zealand, with housing costs the single largest cause of poverty.

Contracts Act

THE COALITION agreement says that National and NZ First will leave the main provisions of the Employment Contracts Act in place. It also promises to review the Holidays Act and the Employment Court.

National's Minister of Labour, Max Bradford, has said the coalition wants to make the Holidays Act more "flexible" – in other words, remove workers' rights to statutory holidays.

The coalition's only planned "reform" of the Act is to put in "fair bargaining".

We need a fightback

THE COALITION agreement between National and NZ First shows that they are content to continue governing in the interests of the rich.

It offers nothing to the workers, students and beneficiaries who have paid the price for years of market reforms and spending cuts.

But the coalition's plans can be upset. Even the most right-wing government can be forced to backtrack if it is faced with mass protests.

This can be seen by the recent general strike in Korea. It can be seen in the massive revolt that shook France in December 1995, and in the French truckers victory late last year.

If the same thing was to happen here it would destroy all the plans contained in the coalition agreement.

What socialists say about....

Is Marxism a pakeha ideology?

ONE CRITICISM of Marxism that is often levelled is that it is a Pakeha ideology or "Eurocentric".

Marxism, the argument goes, was developed by Pakeha in Europe and therefore looks at the rest of the world through Pakeha eyes.

Since the dominant attitude of Europeans towards the rest of the world (especially Asia, Africa and other colonial areas) was imperialist and racist some of these attitudes rubbed off on Marxism, it is said.

Moreover, Marxism's claims to universal global validity are just part of a wider claim by Pakeha thinkers for the universal validity of Western culture. Other cultures, such as Maori, are seen as invalid or inferior.

It is also suggested Marxists take concepts developed in the context of European history and society and mechanically impose them on non-European societies where they do not fit reality.

It is indeed true that all ideas and theories are social products.

They do not fall from the skies into the minds of "great thinkers" but arise from specific historical circumstances and respond to specific social needs.

Validity

Therefore every theory, including Marxism, is marked by its conditions of origin.

It does not, however, follow that the validity of a theory is limited to the time and place of its formulation.

Copernicus discovered that the Earth went around the sun in the 16th century.

This did not mean cease to be true in the 17th or 18th centuries.

Newton discovered the law of gravity in England. That does not make the law inapplicable in Japan or Australia.

Arab mathematicians invented the zero and the Chinese invented gunpowder.

This has not inhibited the use of either in Europe, North America, or Aotearoa.

These examples do not prove that the basic principles of Marxism are of international validity, but they do show they could be.

In fact the core ideas of Marx's theory of history – that the driving force of history is the development of the forces of production and the class struggle – were derived not just from European history but from the totality of world history.

That includes the history of primitive communist societies, which Marx and Engels much admired.

Also it is wrong to depict Marxism as part of the dominant 19th century European outlook.

It developed in opposition

to that outlook.

Part of that opposition was internationalism and opposition to racism and imperialism.

There was already an anti-racist, anti-imperialist tradition in the working class movement before Marx.

Marx deepened that tradition with his call, "Workers of the world, unite", his defence of Irish and Polish self-determination and his support for the north in the American Civil War.

In the 20th century Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky developed it further with their analysis of imperialism, their opposition to the First World War and their support for revolution in the colonies.

However, the most important argument against notions of "Eurocentrism" is what has happened to capitalism and the working class.

Marxism is the theory of the working class struggle against capitalism.

It arose first in Europe because the working class appeared first in Europe.

Spreading

But even as Marxism was writing, capitalist production was spreading to the rest of the world.

Marx understood this process with complete clarity. In the *Communist Manifesto* he wrote:

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie [capitalists] over the whole surface of the globe..."

"It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois [capitalist] mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, ie to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."

Marx's words describe perfectly the process of colonisation in Aotearoa, through which capitalist relations were forced on Maori and Pakeha workers alike.

And today we can see that what Marx predicted has indeed come about all across the globe, perhaps more completely than he ever imagined.

Today there is no country that is not caught up in the net of the world capitalist market, no country where capitalist relations of production are not the dominant relations.

We live in a world where capital rushes to invest in south China, where Pepsi sells in Vietnam, where BP operates in Colombia and Shell in Nigeria.

Marxism as a theoretical guide to workers' resistance to the power of capital and to international workers revolution has relevance and resonance in every corner of the globe – including Aotearoa.

by JOHN MOLYNEUX

The working class road to emancipation

MANY READERS of *Socialist Worker* will have seen Neil Jordan's film about Irish Republican leader Michael Collins.

It showed the guerilla struggle waged against British colonial rule in Ireland between 1918 and 1921.

But it misses out the alternative tradition represented by the great revolutionary socialist James Connolly.

James Connolly, like Michael Collins, took part in the 1916 Dublin Easter Rising against British rule.

But, unlike Michael Collins, James Connolly was a Marxist who spent his life fighting for working class liberation from both British and Irish bosses.

He was born in Edinburgh in 1866, the third son of Irish Catholic immigrants.

Poverty forced Connolly to seek work at the age of 10, and at the age of 14, like many poor working class teenagers, Connolly enlisted in the British army.

It was as a soldier that he first visited Dublin. Disgust at the British army's behaviour in Ireland led him to "discharge himself".

Back in Edinburgh, Connolly threw himself into socialist activity before moving back to Dublin in 1896 to become a full time organiser for the Dublin Socialist Group.

Within weeks of his arrival Connolly disbanded the group and formed his own party, the Irish Socialist Republican Party. It was Ireland's first socialist party.

It aimed at bringing together the fight for socialism with the fight against British colonial rule in Ireland.

Connolly argued that British rule was not only a barrier to the capitalist development of Ireland but could "only serve the interests of the exploiting classes of both nations."

The party's programme declared, "The national and economic freedom of the Irish people must be sought in the same direction, the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic."

The party remained tiny and it collapsed in 1903. But while working for it Connolly produced a range of important socialist literature, including the

first Marxist paper in Ireland, the *Workers' Republic*.

In *Labour in Irish History* – which was finally published as a book in 1910 – Connolly argued that class was the key to understanding Irish history.

In words that could equally apply to events in Ireland since his death, he wrote:

"Without this key to the meaning of events, this clue to unravel the actions of 'great men', Irish history is but a welter of unrelated facts, a hopeless chaos of sporadic outbreaks, treacheries, intrigues, massacres, murders, a purposeless warfare."

In opposition to the nationalist view, Connolly illustrated how the class struggle had underpinned the whole of Irish history.

Irish bosses were tied to British capitalism, Connolly argued, by "a thousand economic strings" and feared their economic interests would be threatened by a full break with British imperialism.

Connolly argued this meant that the Irish capitalist class would not fight consistently against the British Empire. Therefore, it fell to the working class to carry the battle against imperialism to its conclusion.

This analysis was a major contribution to socialist understanding of the national question at the time.

It went against the orthodoxy of the international socialist movement which dismissed the idea that workers could lead the struggle in the colonies.

For Connolly, the class struggle and the liberation of Ireland were inseparable. "The Irish working class must emancipate itself and in emancipating itself must perform free its own country," he wrote.

Connolly spent the years 1903 to 1910 in the United States. There he became inspired by the ideas of syndicalism – of organising workers into one big union.

He became a full time organiser for the International Workers of the World, or Wobblies as they became known, which organised strikes by unskilled workers across the USA.

When Connolly returned to Ireland in 1910, he threw himself into political activity and joined the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU), formed by the socialist agitator James Larkin.

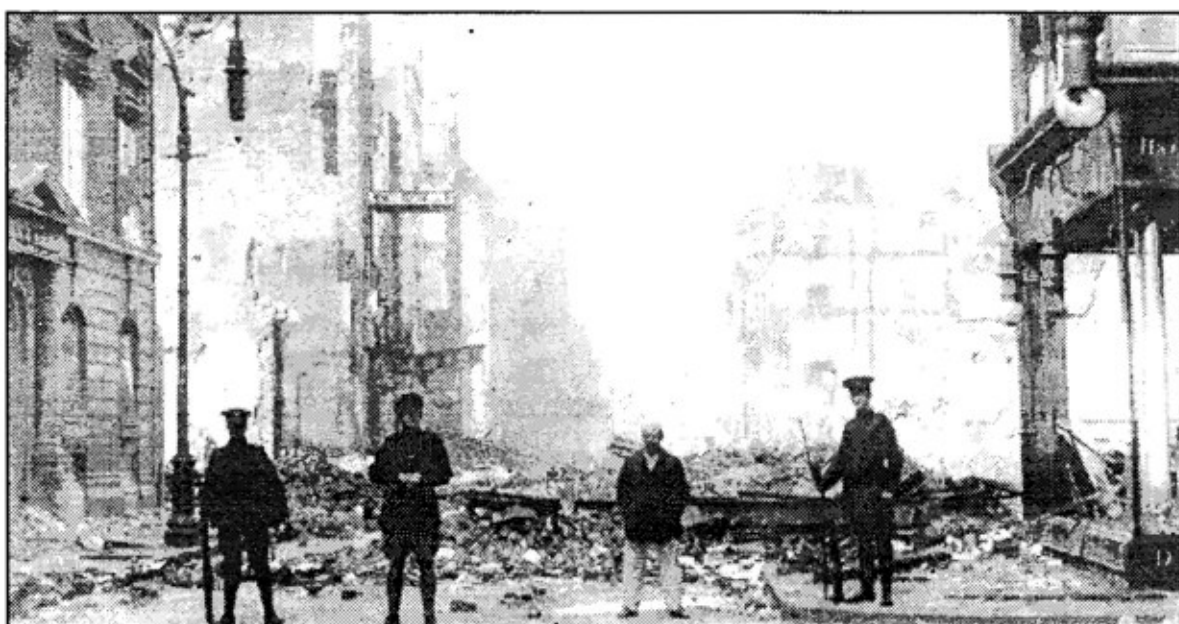
The idea of turning the ITGWU into a "big union" seemed a real possibility at the time. Like Britain, Ireland witnessed an upsurge of working class struggle in the years leading up to the First World War.

Connolly became an organiser for the ITGWU in Belfast. But he despised those who argued for ignoring the question of British rule by concentrating solely on economic issues.

He believed the ideas of Loyalism and the Orange Lodge were tools the bosses used to divide workers, and argued that all socialists, both Protestant and Catholic, had to fight against Orangeism.

This did not mean writing off the protestant working class.

In 1911, in an article called "Sweet-



THE BRITISH reaction to the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin was brutal.

shops Behind the Orange Flag", he wrote, "The true blue Loyalist leaders who on every platform assert their unquenchable enthusiasm for the cause of Protestant liberty, are the slimiest enemies of the social advancement of the Protestant working class."

Connolly called for special propaganda for "the conversion to socialism of Orangemen".

Connolly understood that the hold of Orangeism on Protestant workers' ideas would be more readily broken during periods of intense class revolt.

So he combined his attacks on

Orangeism with appeals to Protestant workers to join Catholics in battles against the boss.

Connolly spent the last years of his life in the forefront of the battles of the working class.

In 1913 he was at the centre of the Battle which became known as the Great Dublin Lockout.

In that struggle the bosses, led by the pro-Home Rule boss of the *Irish Independent* and Dublin tramways, launched an all out attack on workers' organisation.

From August 1913 to February

1914 workers across Dublin put up a marvellous resistance, which was eventually defeated because of the refusal of British union officials to spread solidarity with the action. It was now that British rulers first floated the idea of partitioning Ireland.

Connolly warned from the start this would mean "a carnival of reaction both north and south".

But in 1914 he added, "It still remains to be seen whether the working class agitation cannot succeed in frightening these vampires from the feast they are promising themselves on the corpse of a dismembered Ireland".

Partition dangers

WHEN THE First World War broke out in 1914, Connolly was one of the few socialists who maintained opposition to the slaughter.

He railed against workers being forced "to slaughter each other for the benefit of kings and financiers." He believed that only "a great continental uprising of the working class would stop the war" and began to plan for revolution in Ireland.

Connolly put pressure on the Republicans to carry out such an insurrection. He hoped it would both raise the possibility of breaking British rule in Ireland and of sparking resistance to the war across Europe.

Isolated

The rising in Dublin, April 1916, involved a few hundred of Connolly's Irish Citizens' Army, set up at the end of the Dublin Lockout, and about 1000 Republican fighters.

But the Easter Rising was isolated, and took place a year before the first waves of workers revolt in Europe against the war.

The British government ruthlessly bombarded the rebels into submission, rounded up their leaders and executed them.

On May 12 Connolly, severely wounded and suffering from gangrene, was strapped to a stretcher and

shot down by a British army firing squad.

Throughout his political life Connolly warned of the dangers of failing to link the struggle for independence with the struggle for socialism.

But tragically Connolly failed to build a socialist organisation which could carry that argument through. The price of that failure was paid in the years which followed Connolly's death in the Irish War of Independence.

It meant the politics of middle class Republicanism dominated and Michael Collins signed the treaty of partition instead of carrying on the war against imperialism.

Partition was a disaster for the working class over the next 70 years, as Connolly had warned: "It would perpetuate in a form aggravated in evil the discords now prevalent, and help the Home Rule and Orange capitalists and clerics to keep their rally cries before the public as the political watchwords of the day."

Connolly wrote that, "Only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

Moreover, he argued that economic struggle alone was not enough. Socialist politics were crucial to win the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers against the bosses of all political colours.

That remains as true today as it was in Connolly's lifetime.

Ireland's Permanent Revolution

by CHRIS BAMBERY

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Meets every Tuesday at 7.30pm at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga.

Phone 634 3984 or write to Box 8851, Auckland.

Timberlands

Meets every second Wednesday of each month at 7pm at Apumoana marae, Tarawera Rd.

Phone Bernie 345 9853.

Wellington

Meets every Wednesday at 7.30 pm in the meeting hall behind St Peters Church, corner Ghuznee & Willis St.

Phone Gordon 564 3270

Paper sales every Thursday, noon to 1.30pm at Manners Mall

Christchurch

Meets every second Sunday at 7.30 pm at the WEA, 59 Gloucester St.

Phone Roy 3844 681

Dunedin

Meets every Thursday at 8 pm, Room 7, Clubs and Societies Building, 84 Albany Street.

The Socialist Workers Organisation also has members and supporters in North Shore, Hamilton, Paeroa, Napier, Kawerau, Raglan, Palmerston North, Timaru, and the West Coast. They can be contacted via the Socialist Centre in Auckland (09) 634 3984.

Australia

International Socialists at PO Box A338, Sydney South, ph 261 4862.



Socialism

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war.

Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial stalinist ruling class.

Revolution not reformism

The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Alliance, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state – a democratic workers state based on workers councils and workers militia.

Internationalism

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

Liberation from oppression

We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

Tino rangatiratanga

We support the struggle for Maori self determination.

The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers state.

Revolutionary party

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

The Socialist Workers Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

Twenty arrests at spy-base

POLICE ARRESTED twenty protesters at the 10th annual demonstration outside the Waihopai spy base near Blenheim.

The Waihopai base is run by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and is used to spy on telephone calls, faxes, E-mails and telexes sent via satellite from anywhere in the Pacific.

This means it can be used to spy on any international electronic communication coming from within New Zealand.

The information gathered is then shared with countries such as Australia, Britain and the United States.

They can use the information gathered through stations like Waihopai and Tangimoana on the Manawatu coast to gain an advantage in trade and arms deals. Some is used for political manipulation and influence in international affairs.

New Zealand's spy stations are a part of an international network of intelligence gathering installations used by the United States and its allies to gather information on rivals.

About 60 demonstrators joined the Anti-Bases Campaign protest this year. They gathered at the gate to the Waihopai base to demand its closure.

Among the protesters were Alliance MP Rod Donald and Labour MP Marian Hobbs.

Trespass

Police had previously issued trespass notices preventing the demonstrators from even walking over the Crown owned farmland surrounding the perimeter of the base.

Carrying banners and singing, 20 of the protest group climbed over a farm gate and began walking towards the base's perimeter fence. They were met by a dozen police officers, who arrested them for trespass and bundled them into waiting vans.

Rod Donald, Mariane Hobbs and Nicky Hager, author of the book *Secret Power* which exposes the operations of Waihopai, were warned to leave the state owned land surrounding the base.

The GCSB has a budget of \$18.5 million. That's enough to provide for 20 new schools.

But instead the money is wasted on a spy station that can listen into



ANTI-BASES protesters prepare to march on Waihopai spy station (inset).

almost any communication coming from New Zealand or any of our Pacific neighbours.

Oversight of the GCSB lies with the Prime Minister. In 1991 Jim Bolger told Parliament that Waihopai wasn't used to spy on Pacific Island nations.

But these words ring hollow to a former section head of Australia's Defence Intelligence Organisation, Dr Greg Austin.

He said of Waihopai "It's either spying on its neighbours or it's spying on New Zealanders."

In the run-up to the election NZ First leader Winston Peters promised to investigate the GCSB. Yet while he was acting PM during Jim Bolger's recent trip to Antarctica he did nothing.

Labour leader Helen Clark has a guaranteed seat on the Parliamentary intelligence committee.

She could use this seat to pressure the government into an open inquiry into what the GCSB does, and why it is worth more than 20 new schools.

Education crisis...Education crisis...Education crisis

New school year brings no relief

THE RETURN of children to school may have brought relief to many parents, but the beginning of the new school year sees no relief from the continuing crisis in education.

An total of 16,000 more students are expected to enrol in our schools this year.

But some of them may arrive at school to find there is no teacher available for them. This is due to the ongoing teacher shortage.

The Education Ministry's national manager of TeachNZ, Irene Lynch, was unable to promise that each class would have a teacher when students arrived.

Educationalists have warned of a looming teacher shortage for years. But the National government did nothing to avoid it.

They refused to raise teachers pay to help attract more graduates into teaching.

Primary teachers only won pay parity with secondary school teachers after taking strike action. And secondary teachers had to stage strikes throughout 1996 in order to get an average 12 per cent pay increase.

The National government also tried to force through its bulk funding scheme on schools – leading to massive bitterness amongst teachers.

On top of this teacher shortage, heavy workloads, underfunding and a particular shortage of Maori teachers are creating a crisis in the education system.

Not only does this place a huge burden on teachers, it also threatens the education of children. Particularly at risk are children attending poorer schools.

These schools cannot rely on

wealthy parents to provide money to compensate for the lack of government funding.

Already some state schools are charging parents compulsory fees, despite the fact that this is illegal. This locks out pupils whose parents cannot afford to pay these fees.

This crisis has sparked resistance from those at the chalkface of our schools. Teachers from early childhood right through to University level took industrial action last



ON STRIKE in 1996 – and 1997 year.

This year primary teacher union leader Bill Noble has warned of "wildcat" strikes by primary teachers if their pay claims are not listened to.

And the Post Primary Teachers Association is proposing to its members that NZ First's Associate Education Minister Brian Donnelly be banned from visiting secondary schools over bulk funding.

Socialist Worker welcomes your

letters

Post to Box 8851, Auckland; fax (09) 634 3984

• Please include address or phone number to verify authorship and keep to under 200 words

Income Support sit-in wins improved service

AN HOUR long sit-in at the North Shore Income Support offices in Takapuna, Auckland has won an agreement that telephone services will be improved to give easier access to beneficiaries needing information.

The sit-in was staged by the Poverty Action/Beneficiaries Coalition after overworked staff were taking 10 days or longer to return calls.

As a result of the sit-in, Income Support also agreed to immediately review one beneficiary's case after they were having to borrow to pay taxi fares to attend hospital 2-3 times per week.

The protesters pledged to continue the fight to have welfare benefits restored to the pre-1991 level – or they predict more "sit-ins" will occur throughout the country on a larger scale.

The increase in foodbanks nationwide is proof that beneficiaries needs are not met.

Many working people are now forced to rely on foodparcels.

□ PERCY A., Auckland

NZ First MP attacks "parasites"

Profiting from the treaty settlements

THE COALITION Government's Associate Treasurer and NZ First MP John Delamere has launched a stinging attack on "legal parasites who have been able to sponge up the potential benefits Maori may have been able to get from the Sealord settlement."

"The law fraternity have benefited enormously from treaty claims and Maori have seen precious little" he claimed.

Delamere even went so far as to say "Most of the tribes who have made progress [in settling Treaty claims] have done it notwithstanding the inadequacy of some of the legal representation."

But we should take his criticism of the advice given to Maori claimants with a pinch of salt.

Ranganui Walker, a negotiator for the Bay of Plenty Whakatohea tribe, has accused Delamere of "strong arming" a \$40 million offer to the tribe when Delamere was working for the Office of Treaty Settlements.

This offer is for a full and final settlement of all treaty grievances. Yet the original Whakatohea claim lodged before the Waitangi Tribunal in 1989 covered only raupatu or confiscated land.

Of course, there are lawyers and law firms that have made a fortune out of giving "advice" on Treaty claims.

But Delamere ignores the group of "parasites" that have made the most out of settling Treaty claims. He has nothing to say about the "Browtable" Maori elite who have grown rich through the process of Treaty settlements.

Both Labour and National governments have sought to make deals with a Maori corporate elite in order to settle Treaty claims.

This elite then use their positions of power on Maori trusts and incorporations to turn them into businesses to compete with "Pakeha" business.

"Both Labour and National governments have sought to make deals with a Maori elite in order to settle Treaty claims"

In the process they pick up fat salaries and consultancy fees. But for the majority of Maori little or nothing is delivered.

So, for instance, the Tainui Maori Trust Board used part of the \$170 million Tainui Treaty settlement to buy a corporate box at Auckland's Ericsson Stadium. The box has a maximum capacity of 32, yet the Tainui Trust covers 30,000 beneficiaries.

Sir Graham Latimer, who was a key player in the Sealords deal, was revealed to have a TAB phone account of \$80,000 when he was sentenced for tax offences totalling \$700,000.

On one point Delamere is right though. He says "Treaty settlement claims are not a matter of the law but what the Government is willing to do."

The National Government has proven itself unwilling to offer any just and fair settlement to Maori claims. The billion dollar fiscal envelope is the final proof of this.

Yet the coalition agreement between National and NZ First commits them to "...settle...outstanding Maori claims and grievances, having regard to the nature of Treaty settlements already made..."



JOHN DELAMERE attacks "parasites" while Tainui Trust Board head Bob Mahuta sits pretty in his corporate box.



Maori TV swindle?

AS *SOCIALIST Worker* was going to press details were emerging of a possible swindle involving the Maori language channel Aotearoa TV Network (ATN).

The story emerged as the coalition government agreed to give ATN \$4 million in funding to continue broadcasting for six months.

It appears that two former executives of European Pacific, the company at the heart of the Wirebox tax inquiry, are now executives of companies involved in leasing and selling land and equipment to ATN.

One transaction that has been revealed has companies owned by these two executives buying assets at \$800,000 and reselling them to themselves for \$2 million.

Rednecks around New Zealand are using the story to slam the decision to put money into Maori television. But this is out-and-out racism.

The \$4 million is less than one-twentieth of the entire NZ on Air budget. None of the other channels on New Zealand TV have any Maori language shows on at prime time.

A DAMNING report on Maori mental health was leaked to the media late last year after the National Government suppressed it for over six months.

The report shows the horrific state of mental health amongst Maori.

■ Overall Maori male rates of first admission to psychiatric institutions were about 25 per cent higher than Pakeha rates between 1984 and 1990;

■ Maori female rates of re-admission have increased by 28 per cent, while Maori male re-admission rates have increased by a massive 65 per cent between 1984 and 1993. Both of these increases far outstrip those for Pakeha and Pacific Island re-admission rates;

■ Drug and alcohol abuse and psychosis are the main reasons for Maori men being admitted to psychiatric institutions for the first time.

The authors of the report place some of the blame for these horrific statistics on cultural alienation. They say the rates of psychotic illness indicate a "culture under siege".

But the bleak picture of Maori mental health goes hand in hand with other aspects of Maori inequality.

Maori unemployment stands at 15.9 per cent - over 3 times higher than the rate for Pakeha. Maori tend to live in poorer housing and leave school earlier.

Both Maori men and women live, on average, six years less than Pakeha.

Maori still make up almost 50 per cent of the prison population.

Inequality

It is facts like this that contribute to the appalling record of Maori mental health just as much as cultural alienation.

Maori inequality is the result of systematic, ongoing racism in New Zealand.

And despite the presence of five NZ First Maori MPs in the new coalition government, this inequality will not be addressed in any real way.

National's new Minister of Health, Bill English, responded to the report on Maori mental health by saying "The biggest problem is the shortage of Maori mental health workers."

"When it comes to meeting Maori health needs, it's a damn good idea to have Maori providers doing it."

But at the same time, he said there would be no extra money for Maori health!

Tau Henare, the NZ First Minister of Maori Affairs also said any extra money to pay for Maori mental health workers lies "a way down the track".

For all the noise made about Maori self-empowerment and tino rangitiratanga by NZ First and National they are not prepared to commit anything to combating the atrocious effect of inequality on Maori mental health.

Which way forward?

THE FACT of Maori inequality is indisputable. But what is the solution to the poverty, poor-health and racism that ordinary Maori face every day?

One solution that is put up is that Maori must develop their own "corporate warriors" to lead Maori out of "dependency". This approach is summed up by Professor James Ritchie, a key advisor to Tainui leaders in the Waikato.

He claims "the objective should be to create an educated, affluent and business-minded group of people because they are aware of the problems that affect their culture, and not have agencies creating policy for them".

NZ First supports this goal with its call for "devolution" of resource and power to Maori structures.

But a devolution of resources and power to a relatively small class of "corporate warriors" won't help the vast majority of flaxroots Maori suffering at the bottom of the heap.

It is precisely the pro-business economic reforms pursued by both the fourth Labour government and National that have resulted in the high rate of Maori unemployment and poverty.

The creation of a Maori business elite will not change this one bit - it will only mean a tiny minority of Maori will achieve equality with a tiny minority of Pakeha business leaders.

Mass Action

Instead of trying to create a Maori business elite, the real solution to Maori inequality lies in mass action to demand jobs, better pay, affordable housing and a fair settlement of Treaty claims. All this requires redistributing wealth from the rich minority - Maori and Pakeha - to the vast majority who have little or nothing.

The defeat of the fiscal envelope through mass protest was a start - now we need to keep going forwards.

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